

Social Service Human Relations Board
Minutes of the Special Meeting, Thursday, November 15, 2007

1. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL: Acting President Wasko called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. Present were Acting President Wasko, Members Nielsen, Franz, Villareal, Soglin, and James along with staff members Wright and Jones. Member Chen was absent.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES : The regular meeting minutes from August 23, 2007 were approved. M/S Franz, Soglin and unanimous.

3-A. REVIEW JOINT MEETING WITH ALAMEDA YOUTH COLLABORATIVE ON HEALTH CARE:

Acting President Wasko reviewed the content of the presentation given by Dr. Tony Iton (Director, Alameda County Public Health Department) at the September 27, 2007 Joint Meeting with the Youth Collaborative. She explained that the presentation presented a global view of health care and wellness that included analyzing the costs of individuals to the health care system at different points in their life span. Wasko explained that the joint meeting was an opportunity to look at points of intersection in the Board and the Youth Collaborative.

Member Soglin added that Dr. Iton's presentation included and impressive statistics about the health and schools. He explained that the statistics were not surprising, but that they were useful for conversations about health and schools. He further stated that the presentation has been posted to Mike McMahon's website and can be viewed there.

Wasko explained that Member Nielsen (Chair, Assessment and Awareness Workgroup) has been attending the "Health is Not Just Health Care" meetings co-hosted by Iton with District 3 Supervisor Alice Lai Bitker. She further explained that the meetings are also attended by City and School District officials from Alameda, San Leandro, San Lorenzo, and Oakland. Wasko explained that the goal of the meetings was to begin conversations about using public dollars for preventative health care programs that would target youth and work with schools. To that end, the "Health is Not Just Health Care" group has developed a definition of a healthy school.

Nielsen explained that indicators of health and wellness called youth developmental assets have been studied by the Department of Public Health. The Department has found a number of schools with relatively high poverty rates that are also high in developmental assets. The group is studying those schools to learn more about their success. The "Health is Not Just Health Care" group has also identified a vision statement and goals for increasing community wellbeing by focusing on youth developmental assets. She provided a handout for more information.

Wasko reminded the group that seniors are also impacted by health and wellness needs and that discussing youth needs may be the start of a much larger conversation about health needs.

Member Villareal commented that this information is similar to data that shows that less healthy students are less motivated and are lower achieving academically. He commented that he was interested to hear more about the schools that Nielsen described as high poverty and high performing.

Speakers

Speaker Ms. Tracy Jensen addressed the Board. She is the AUSD representative participating in the “Health is Not Just Health Care” group formed by the Alameda County Board of Supervisor’s office and the Alameda County Department of Health. Ms. Jensen submitted written materials and explained that the materials are from a national conference on building partnerships and include a platform for cities to adopt as part of an effort to strengthen families and improve outcomes for children and youth. She explained that students who have the resources, assets, and opportunities to contribute to their communities, and to help each other are more likely to stay in school and stay out of trouble. She explained that development of positive youth developmental assets could impact students, help families feel safe, and reduce crime.

Speaker Jeanne Kettles addressed the Board and explained the coordinated health services model adopted by the school district which includes health education, physical education, nutrition, health services education, health promotion for staff, healthy school environment and community involvement. The school district received a Health Schools, Striving Students grant from the San Francisco Foundation to begin work on related health and wellness activities. She explained that the grant was used to fund a pilot nutrition curriculum for title one schools program, which exposed students to health fruits and vegetables that in turn leveraged other funding for wellness activities. The funding also supported a community evaluation of health and wellness needs that included similar findings to the Board’s Needs Assessment, including need to address stress. She further explained that there is a need for available, affordable counseling services. She stated that the Mental Health Services Act provides a way to collaboratively work together to access funding for mental health services. She recommends building a structure to work together to increase access to mental health services in Alameda.

Speaker Ms. Kim Nicholls explained that the public services in Alameda have provided her a dis-service, and not been helpful. She cited challenges with domestic violence, childcare, and rent issues. After speaking she was referred to further information and help.

Member James inquired about the Board’s involvement in helping domestic violence victims. Acting President Wasko stated the next presentation would include some information on that topic.

Acting President Wasko reported that a next step is for Dr. Iton to make a presentation at an upcoming Alameda Services Collaborative (ASC) lunch. Motion to invite Dr. Iton to a future ASC luncheon, to consider health and wellness in the upcoming discussion of Housing and Community Development Needs, and to continue to revisit this topic. (M/S Wasko, Franz) and unanimous.

3-B. COMMENTS REGARDING HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND FORMULATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE NEEDS STATEMENT:

Member Franz recused himself from discussion on this agenda item.

Staff member Terri Wright of Development Services provided a presentation on the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). Her presentation included an overview of the Community Development Block Grant, estimated funding for FY 08-09, and a recommendation for revisions to the current list of priority needs. She reminded the Board that their findings regarding the community needs would be submitted to the City Council for on December 18, 2007.

Speakers:

Ms. Lillian Galedo, Filipinos for Affirmative Action addressed the Board. She explained that the organization provides services to youth and newcomers. The APAYL collaborative (Asian Pacific Islander Youth Promoting Advocacy) is a group of six agencies working together to promote youth leadership and to provide organizer training. The youth participate in campaigns aimed at improving conditions in their communities. Filipinos for Affirmative Action serve the Filipino students in that collaborative. Currently about 80% of the youth served are Alameda students, primarily Encinal High School. A smaller group of students are from Alameda High. She reported that the students are looking for a place that is more than a social gathering spot and are seeking to learn organizing skills. Students are currently working on violence prevention campaign. In the past they have worked on improving schools and immigration. The explained organization serves mostly low-and low-moderate income Filipino immigrant families. She further explained that approximately 65% of the Filipino community is foreign born. The youth are looking for assistance with identity development, as they may feel caught between American and Filipino traditions and cultures. She concluded by commenting on the recent investigation of a homicide in Alameda. She commented on police investigation at her office, characterizing the police presence as heavily armed and heavy handed. She explained that the police upset the youth they interviewed and suggested that they should have come in plain clothes.

Acting President Wasiko thanked Galedo for her comments and encouraged her to bring her services to Alameda.

Ms. Tracy Jensen, AUSD, explained that many of the points she wanted to make pertaining to health and wellness were made by the Board during the last agenda item. She encouraged the Board to recommend technical assistance funding for local non-profits that to work in the area of health and wellness, in particular she called for a focus on coordinated health programs. She told the Board that Alameda Unified School District has a substantial number of low-income families (35%). She suggested outreach to these students to families. She concluded by recommending that the Board adopt a statement "supporting a community wellness policy that recognizes the importance of ensuring that Alameda youth have the tools they need to achieve success."

Ms. Jeanne Kettles, AUSD Wellness Council, reported that other school districts have used CDBG funding for the development of a structure to support the delivery of coordinated school health services. She provided the example of Mt Diablo, which identified as a priority access to food security and were able to use CDBG Technical Assistance money to support the development of a structure for collaboration between community based organizations and the school to promote health and wellness. She told the story of a teacher at the school that has had success in supporting students to increase their

academic achievement through social and cultural support. She further explained that collaboration can increase effectiveness of programs and can assist in determining best practices.

Ms. Tina Fleeton, BANANAs, Inc., thanked the Board for funding BANANAS. BANANAS has been administering the child car voucher program for ten years. They have been successful in supporting eligible families to attain childcare and also provide referrals to families in need. Fleeton explained that she was a parent who received support from the program while she was in school. This program has also helped many other families and look forward to enrolling more families. BANANAS is investigating increasing the stipend program from \$200 to \$250 and extending the voucher from 9 to 12 months. BANANAS has also transferred eligible families to a long-term subsidy program to provide longer-term assistance to families funded by other agency funds. She is asking for the continued funding and support from the City of Alameda.

Acting President Wasko thanked Fleeton. Wasko commented that she was glad to hear that the program was an effective steppingstone for families working to achieve self-sufficiency. She further comments that CDBG is meant to leverage other resources and was glad to hear that families were being transferred to the long term program. She thanked Fleeton for her patience.

Ms. Liz Varela, Building Futures With Women and Children, reported they operate the Midway Shelter and Bessie Coleman Court and thanked the City for the funding they've received throughout the years. They serve homeless women and children at their shelter, providing housing, case management, children's programming, and links to school district. Their primary focus will be getting people into housing first to lower level of crisis and then helping them to find permanent housing more quickly. She concluded by adding that the community support in Alameda is impressive. Meals are cooked and donated to the shelter by Alamedan volunteers each day.

Mr. Paul Russell, Alameda Food Bank, thanked the Board and staff for their help and support. They recently had a ribbon cutting for the new larger Food Bank facility. Paul thanked the City for the \$130,000 of CDBG funding for the new facility. Last year, the Food Bank served 1,300 Alamedan households representing over 3,000 people in Alameda. Fifty-one percent were under age 18, which is much higher than the national average for Food Banks, which is about 35%. The need increases each year. Last year the increase was about 5% last year. The Food Bank has also seen an increase in the number of homeless households. They serve many working families, and believe they are serving only about half of the people qualified to receive services. The Food Bank has started to collaborate with Alameda Family Literacy Program to provide groceries to culturally and linguistically isolated families who have not yet accessed the Food Bank. The Food Bank is available to help them stretch their budgets.

Wasko asked if the 1300 households served included Meals on Wheels.

Russell – No.

Wasko thanked Russell for his comments and congratulated him on the ribbon cutting.

Mr. Jim Franz, Alameda Red Cross, would like to ask the Board for the continued support of the safety net services. He stated that safety net services included not just the Red Cross, but also services such as the Food Bank and the Midway shelter. He explains that a coordinated effort of safety net services ensures that there are no holes in the safety net and to prevent homelessness. He hopes support for the community wellness approach is also included in the Needs Statement. He explained that we are in a “this” and “that” situation. He encouraged the continuation of collaborations like the Alameda Services Collaborative as a way to do more with less. For example, through collaborative efforts with Red Cross, Alameda Fire Department, Alameda Police Department, Alameda Unified School District, and the SF Foundation; 120 families (close to 600 people) were provided disaster readiness training and received free disaster kits. The training was delivered in three languages to empower families to be part of the community and have resources they need to be prepared for a disaster.

Mr. Doug Biggs, Alameda Point Collaborative, thanked the Board for their work. He explained that he understands that the Board’s decision regarding public service funding is difficult because of the limited funding. The Alameda Point Collaborative doesn’t request public service funding for that reason and seeks other sources of funding. He then stated that he believes that safety net services need to remain a priority. He thanked staff for work soliciting needs and identifying long term strategies to meet this needs. He commented that the technical assistance funding provided to APC in order to help them become a Community Based Development Organization would help APC access long term funding to engage in economic development without impacting public service funding. He stressed the importance of supporting low-income communities access to economic opportunity.

Wasko – It would be interesting to know how much funding is leveraged by CDBG funded programs.

Soglin – Should we discuss the issue of foreclosure needs in Alameda, is this considered ‘safety-net’ and could CDBG funds be used?

Wright – Yes, there is a way that funds can be used to stay-off foreclosure.

Wasko –Wasko then asked if there are agencies providing this service.

Soglin – ACORN.

Wasko suggested looking at the bullet points on last year’s letter, and setting priorities. Wasko noted that foreclosures would be captured by the language supporting families “in crisis”. She mentioned that more specific language about foreclosures may belong in the RFP, rather than in the Needs Statement. She suggested an emphasis of making people aware of services through the forums or hospital fair.

Soglin – Speakers Jensen and Kettles emphasize youth. Is there something more specific we want to say about targeting youth programs for funding?

Wasko – In the prior years, the focus on youth was achieved through a focus on families in the context of helping the family support the child.

Nielsen – There wasn't anyone speaking on employment or job training services and we didn't hear any emphasis on this need. When we have no speakers, what is the process?

Wasko – Agencies not present tonight can still apply for funding. Employment and job training is a priority area for funding even if representatives aren't here to speak tonight. Wasko then said she was glad to see Filipinos for Affirmative Action represented. She explained that it is important to try to open doors to agencies that target isolated populations. She further explained that bringing new programs to Alameda is important. She cited the Board's efforts to increase access to dental care as an example.

James – The words 'health care' do not seem to capture the scope of the health conversations tonight. He suggested that priorities should include physical activity for youths. He reported that the school district cut middle school sports programs in the budget cuts and that such health related activities should also be captured in the language of the priority needs.

Soglin - The term wellness can be used to broaden the scope of health issues that are prioritized.

James suggested the term health and wellness.

Conversation continued and the term "health and wellness" was suggested to replace the term health care. Health and wellness was suggested to be included in both the safety net and economic and social self-sufficiency categories.

James – A focus on collaboration is also important concept. The goal is to coordinate the safety net services in such a way to ensure that not one will fall through the cracks.

Wasko – The tax preparation program is also needed. Wasko mentioned that she would like to see an expansion of that service. Wasko also state the importance of continuing to combat housing discrimination and of increasing supports for parents. She suggested that the fourth bullets remain in the letter. The disability community is getting more educated and there is another opportunity there.

James agreed that the bullets should remain and suggested that youth empowerment be added.

Motion for staff to draft the letter with the reported revisions (health care replaced by term health and wellness; add youth development to empowerment bullet), and for two Board members (Wasko, Nielsen) to review the letter for approval.

(M/S Soglin, James) and unanimous.

Franz returns as a Board member.

3-C. NOMINATION OF OFFICERS: Motion for Acting President Wasko nominated as President. (M/S Franz, James) and unanimous. Wasko accepted nomination. Motion for Member Chen nominated as Vice-President. (M/S Villareal, Nielsen) and unanimous. Member Chen was not present to accept nomination.

3-D. WORKGROUP STATUS REPORTS: Motion for workgroup status reports be suspended until next meeting. (M/S Franz, Wasko) and unanimous.

4. BOARD / STAFF COMMUNICATIONS: Member James stated this was a good first meeting.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None.

6. ADJOURNMENT: Acting President Wasko adjourned the meeting at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary, Social Services Human Relations Board

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